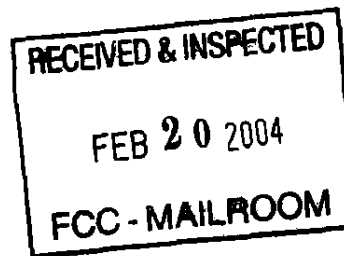


EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

PETE GOICOECHEA

ASSEMBLYMAN

District 35



DISTRICT OFFICE
P.O. Box 97
580 S. Monroe Street
Eureka, Nevada 89316-0097
Home (775) 237-5300
Cell (775) 778-1620

COMMITTEES

Member

Government Affairs

Natural Resources, Agriculture
and Mining

Transportation

ORIGINAL

State of Nevada Assembly

LEGISLATIVE BUILDING

401 S. Carson Street
Carson City, Nevada 89701-4747
Office (775) 684-8573
Fax No. (775) 684-8894

February 18, 2004

Seventy-Second Session

Michael K. Powell

Kathleen Q. Abernathy

Michael J. Copps

Kevin J. Martin

Jonathan S. Adelstein

Federal Communications Commission

445 12th Street SW

Washington, DC 20554

**RE: In the Matter of Section 272(b)(1)'s "Operate Independently"
Requirement for Section 272 Affiliates, WC Docket No. 03-228**

Dear Commissioners:

This letter addresses the Federal Communications Commission's notice of proposed rulemaking in WC Docket No. 03-228 regarding section 272(b)(1)'s "operate independently" requirement. I am a Nevada State Assemblyman representing portions or all of Lander, Churchill, Eureka, White Pine, Pershing, Washoe and Humboldt counties. The district that I represent is very rural. Four hundred and eighty (480) miles across the state from Baker at the Utah line to Gerlach in northern Washoe county. Most of my constituents receive basic telephone service from an incumbent local exchange carrier - SBC. Even though Lander County is a very rural area, SBC has one employee who resides in this area to maintain basic local telephone service.

My constituents would benefit greatly if they also had access to broadband services such as DSL. However, at present, it is not

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economically viable for the ILEC to also provide DSL services in this remote area because the "operate independently" requirements make it difficult for a single employee to work on DSL and basic telephone services. If a separate visit to this area is required each time a customer needs help with DSL installation or maintenance, it would require eight (8) hours of round trip travel.

I understand that you will soon be voting on whether to modify these requirements. I encourage you to change the rules so that it will be economically viable for companies to install and maintain broadband services in rural areas. In rural areas, such as my district, it makes a lot of sense to have the same person support as many services as possible. By lifting the current requirement to operate independently you will be helping my constituents gain access to important technologies that will help with local economic development. This is the 21st century - rural Nevada needs the opportunity to be competitive with the urban area/districts.

Please feel free to contact me if you want to discuss this in more detail. I can be reached at (775)237-5300.

I wish to express my sincere thanks in your consideration of this very needed and important change.

Most Sincerely,



**Pete Golcochea
Nevada State Assemblyman,
District #35**

**PG/gg
cc: Lander County Commissioners**